



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113
Phone: (505) 346-2525 Fax: (505) 346-2542

April 16, 2002

Cons. # 2-22-02-F-321

Memorandum

To: Area Manager, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Albuquerque Area Office,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

From: Field Supervisor, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Subject: Initiation of Formal Consultation for the Pecos River 2002 Irrigation Season Water
Operations

This letter acknowledges the April 5, 2002, receipt of your transmittal memorandum and "Biological Assessment of Proposed Pecos River 2002 Irrigation Season Operations on the Pecos Bluntnose Shiner" requesting initiation of formal consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 to 1544 *et seq.*) (Act).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received the information necessary to initiate formal consultation, as outlined in the regulations governing interagency consultation (50 CFR § 402.14). All information required of you to initiate this consultation was either included with your letter and biological assessment or is otherwise accessible for our consideration and reference.

Section 7 allows the Service up to 90 calendar days to conclude formal consultation with your agency and an additional 45 calendar days to prepare our biological opinion (unless we mutually agree to an extension). Therefore, we expect to provide you with our biological opinion no later than July 8, 2002.

As a reminder, the Act requires that after initiation of formal consultation, the Federal action agency may not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that limits future options. This practice ensures agency actions do not preclude the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives that avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or destroying or modifying their critical habitats.

We have assigned number 2-22-02-F-321 to this consultation. Please refer to that number in future correspondence on this consultation. If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please feel free to contact me or Dennis Coleman of this office at (505) 346-2525, ext. 116.

Joy E. Nicholopoulos

cc:

Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Project Leader, New Mexico Fishery Resources Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Albuquerque, New Mexico